

VZCZCXRO5356  
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHDR #1568/01 3401426  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 061426Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7130  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 3267  
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY 2612  
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 0167  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 3100  
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 1047  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0354  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0862  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0263  
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0073  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA AU PRIORITY 0008  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA//J3 PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAR ES SALAAM 001568

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2017

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SUBJECT: TANZANIA WALKS FINE LINE ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: STATE 0162558

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, D. Purnell Delly for reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) Tanzania's firm position is that neither Iran nor any nation should pursue the development of nuclear weapons, Deputy Foreign Minister Seif Ali Iddi told the Deputy Chief of Mission on December 4. Iddi explained that he had accompanied Vice President Ali Mohamed Shein on his late November trip to Iran, but that the "nuclear issue" had not been raised by either side.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Iddi said that he welcomed the statements in the USG National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) issued on December 3 that Iran has halted its covert nuclear weapons program. He emphasized that the Government of Tanzania (GOT) was "deeply disturbed" to learn of the development of nuclear weapons prior to 2003. Iddi reiterated that President Kikwete and the GOT are committed to promoting peace throughout the region and the world. While Tanzania has consistently supported any country's right to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear power, "We would never condone actions leading to the development or proliferation of nuclear weapons."

¶3. (C) The DCM replied if nuclear issues had not been an issue during the recent trip to Tehran, then they should have been. The NIE was profoundly troubling in confirming a nuclear weapons program before 2003. The time line for development of nuclear weapons was set by the pace of uranium enrichment, and there was a Chapter VII resolution calling for Iran to cease such enrichment. As Iran accrued enriched uranium, it could decide to restart its weapons program at any time. Furthermore, there was Iran's ballistic missile program, exceedingly expensive, and cost effective only if such missiles carried nuclear rather than conventional payloads.

¶4. (C) Finally, Iran's nuclear issue went beyond regional security to include the global economy. Sustained progress

in developing nuclear weapons, or in the worst case analysis, an actual test, could have a dramatic effect on the price of oil. Markets, indeed, react not only to real risk, but to mere perceptions of risk, and in a world where supply and demand are carefully balanced, a nuclear Iran could precipitate a dramatic spike in oil prices affecting the global economy, and particularly net importers like Tanzania.

In short, Tanzania must make cessation of enrichment an important piece of its dialogue with Iran, not only because of regional security, but because its own investment in long-term economic growth hung in the balance. The DCM asked for a public statement urging Iran to cease its enrichment program and fully cooperate with the IAEA.

15. (C) Deputy FM Iddi said that Tanzania has consistently told Iran that the IAEA must be allowed to do its job. "We have insisted to the GOI at the most senior levels that if Iran has nothing to hide, they should come clean and show the IAEA inspectors everything they ask to see." Iddi emphasized that although Tanzania has been in debt-relief discussions with the Government of Iran, progress in these talks are in no way linked to any nuclear issues.

Comment

16. (C) If Tanzania steered clear of raising the nuclear issue with Iran during the Vice President's recent trip, there were short-term economic imperatives for doing so. The newspapers in recent days, in covering the VP's trip to Iran, have laid out pieces of what seem to us to be a thinly disguised deal: Iran will forgive Tanzanian debt totaling over USD 227 million, and in return, Tanzania pledges to open an embassy

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in Tehran and, as the VP steps off the plane, he makes a carefully calculated statement underlining Tanzania's support for nuclear power developed for peaceful purposes, while saying nothing about IAEA's problems with Iran, Iran's past concealment of its enrichment program or Tanzania's staunch opposition to a nuclear program aimed at weapons development.

In short, Tanzania at the moment is acting out of short-term economic self-interest; however, we will continue drive home the point that its long-term economic self-interest is not served by a nuclear-armed Iran in the region with the world's largest petroleum reserves.

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